

Today's News - Monday, December 21, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: Today's news is filled with probably the most "must-reads" we've posted in a single newsletter in recent memory - if you don't have time, bookmark it and check it out over the holidays. You won't be sorry... Happy Winter Solstice!

- Impressive shortlists are a nice way to start the holiday week: Kamin reports on the 7 "stellar" firms shortlisted for the Obama Library in Chicago (no real surprises here - but impressive!).
- Zeiger reports on the 4 stellar teams now vying to bring L.A.'s Pershing Square back to life.
- With any luck, it will be less creepy to walk by construction sites in NYC if any of the 4 finalists' designs in the Construction Shed Design Competition move forward.
- Saltz leads a list of must-reads with a scathing take-down of the growing trend of "ersatz, privatized public spaces," starting with the High Line as the "harbinger of a bad pathogen now transforming public space" (Hudson Yards' Culture Shed really takes a beating: "I don't think I've ever seen a design I loath more" - ouch!).
- Judith Miller (yes, that Miller) poses the intriguing question, "What would Jane say" re: Atlantic Yards and Hudson Yards: Her "ideas have become mainstream" and "'corrupted,' with developers citing her to justify massive building projects that she would almost certainly have opposed" (though Hudson Yards perhaps not so much).
- Giovannini dives deep (and eloquently) into the past, present, and future of the "Los Angeles River and a Robert Moses with the soul of a Jane Jacobs (he means Gehry) - "this is LA's moment to seize its day."
- Wainwright sits through a grilling of London's mayor re: the Garden Bridge: "In the huffing, puffing, insult-throwing court of Boris, the real reason for the garden bridge became clearer than ever."
- Watts is totally wow'd by Calatrava's Museum of Tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro: it's "a little trippy, a little hippy, very worthy," and "must already rank as one of the world's most extraordinary buildings" and, possibly, "one of the planet's most powerful arguments for sustainability."
- Gardiner is less wow'd by KPF's One Vanderbilt in Manhattan, but "even if a design is not entirely prepossessing in and of itself, the quality of the tower may very well attain its own kind of beauty."
- Moore parses the fate of some of the U.K.'s "PoMo palaces" and whether they're really worth saving: "it's decision time," and "the listing campaigns are hotting up."
- Timberlake takes a different tack, pondering the "ethical decisions about unsustainable Modernist architecture": are they "worth retrofitting, or do we tear them down and start over?"
- Hay queries 10 architects re: the legacy and current popularity of Modern architecture: some feel threatened by it, some reject it, and others embrace it.
- Budds queries Harboe re: the challenges of restoring FLW's Taliesin West, and how it is "an exercise in detective work."
- Shirk does some serious detective work to find out where Robert Moses carried out his most ambitious plans: "a squat, Art Deco limestone complex in the marshy, undeveloped expanse of Randall's Island" (some great history, too).
- Jakarta gets the National Geographic treatment with an in-depth (and absolutely fascinating) report on the city's plans to build a 25-mile-long, 80-foot-high seawall shaped like "a mythical bird-like creature" - with lots of new land for developers: "it could cause some environmental harm, but they don't see a better way to save the city" from rising tides.
- The AIA gives its newly-established Commission on Equity in Architecture "one year to research and develop recommendations for generating equitable practices in the profession."
- Perkovic parses "5 events that marked architecture and design in 2015" - and why they're important.
- Call for entries: European Prize for Urban Public Space 2016 + BUR/Berlin University Residences international architectural competition for students and young architects.

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Obama Foundation names finalists to design presidential library: Seven stellar architectural firms - four based in New York, two in Europe and one in Chicago - were named finalists for one of Chicago's, and the nation's, most sought-after design commissions: the Barack Obama Presidential Center... By Blair Kamin -- John Ronan Architects; David Adjaye/Adjaye Associates; Renzo Piano; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects; ShoP Architects; Snohetta - Chicago Tribune

Four finalists selected to redesign Pershing Square: ...will develop fully fleshed out proposals for the five-acre park in Downtown Los Angeles. By Mimi Zeiger -- SWA/Morphosis; James Corner Field Operations/Frederick Fisher & Partners; Agence TER/SALT Landscape Architects; wHY Architecture/Civitas [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

Four Bold New Designs for New York City's Ubiquitous Sidewalk Sheds: Could the city's current design for construction sidewalk sheds become a thing of the past? That's what the New York Building Congress is hoping for. -- Gannett Fleming Engineers and Architects; Francis Cauffman; Gensler; PBDW Architects/Anastos Engineering Associates [images] - Curbed New York

New York Has Solved the Problem of Public Art. But at What Cost? The trend...toward ersatz, privatized public spaces built by developers;...the High Line is the harbinger of a bad pathogen now transforming public space into fussy, extra-busy, overdesigned, high-maintenance mannered playgrounds, curated experiences, and crowd-pleasing spectacles...two similar spaces...Pier 55...and the Culture Shed...Both are nightmares of synthetic space. By Jerry Saltz -- Thomas Heatherwick; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; James Corner Field Operations; Rockwell Group - New York Magazine

What Would Jane Say? Jane Jacobs wrote the book on urban revival, but New York's recent success poses questions that she never had to confront: ... new threats to human-scaled urban neighborhoods have emerged...[Her] ideas have become mainstream - so much so, notes Paul Goldberger, that they've become "corrupted," with developers citing her to justify massive building projects that she would almost certainly have opposed. By Judith Miller - City Journal/The Manhattan Institute

Just Subtract Water: The Los Angeles River and a Robert Moses with the Soul of a Jane Jacobs: Tapping the global Gehry...switched the kliegs onto the river, galvanizing public attention...promises to graft the element of cultural value onto the social value of a public park...merging cultural and ecological landscapes...new data sets are drivers opening up the question of what the river can be...this is LA's moment to seize its day. By Joseph Giovannini -- Frank Gehry; Lewis MacAdams; Ma Lehrer and Associates; Civitas; Wenk Associates; OLIN [images] - Los Angeles Review of Books

'This is a load of cobblers!' Boris Johnson grilled over garden bridge: Secret meetings, unconventional procurement and £10,000 trips to San Francisco at the taxpayers' expense ... more details emerge about the mayor's role: ...adds increasing weight to the suggestion that the entire process was rigged...In the huffing, puffing, insult-throwing court of Boris, the real reason for the garden bridge...became clearer than ever. By Oliver Wainwright -- Heatherwick Studio - Guardian (UK)

Museum of Tomorrow: a captivating invitation to imagine a sustainable world: Rio de Janeiro's new museum, focusing on ideas rather than objects, ecology more than technology, is a little trippy, a little hippy, very worthy but rarely dull: The Museu do Amanhã...must already rank as one of the world's most extraordinary buildings...it may soon also become known for one of the planet's most powerful arguments for sustainability. By Jonathan Watts -- Santiago Calatrava [images] - Guardian (UK)

Beyond the Chrysler Building: ...One Vanderbilt to bring most radical change to Grand Central area since the iconic Art Deco tower went up: ...may not seem to be nearly as obnoxious an intrusion in the landscape as Walter Gropius's nearby 200 Park Avenue [MetLife Building]...The design...does not feel as striking or impressive as one could want...even if a design is not

[entirely prepossessing in and of itself, the quality of the tower may very well attain its own kind of beauty. By James Gardiner -- Kohn Pedersen Fox \(KPF\) \[images\]- The Real Deal \(NYC\)](#)

[Are these PoMo palaces really worth saving? Postmodernism gave Britain the brash, playful architecture of No 1 Poultry, Aztec West business park and the home of M6. Now, as many of these buildings approach the 30-year eligibility limit for listed status, it's decision time: ...the listing campaigns are hotting up... By Rowan Moore -- James Stirling/Michael Wilford; Terry Farrell; Faulkner-Brown Hendy Watkinson and Stoner; Michael Graves; Ian Pollard; CZWG; John Outram; Evans and Shalev; Charles Jencks; Venturi Scott Brown \[images\]- Observer \(UK\)](#)

[Should We Save Mid-Century Modern Icons That Hurt The Environment? James Timberlake charts a course for making ethical decisions about unsustainable Modernist architecture: ...the big question: Are these buildings worth retrofitting, or do we tear them down and start over? What are the ethics of intervening in these mid-century structures to bring them up to energy code compliance? -- Kieran Timberlake; I.M. Pei; Mies van der Rohe; Eero Saarinen; Edward Larabee Barnes; Philip Johnson; Harrison & Abramovitz; SOM; HOK- Fast Company / Co.Design](#)

[Why Modern Architecture Came Back, and What It Looks Like Now: ...Modernism is perhaps even more popular than in its post-World War II heyday...10 architects...weigh in on its legacy. Some felt threatened by...\[its\] continuing and outdated influence. Others simply rejected it. Still others determined that by embracing it, their own work was more disciplined and forward-thinking. By David Hay -- Hufst Projects; Marcel Breuer; Walter Gropius; Le Corbusier; Richard Neutra; Rudolph Schindler; Johnston Marklee; Marlon Blackwell; Lloyd Russell; Matthias Hollwich/HWK; Predock_Frane Architects; Escher GuneWardena; Weiss/Manfredi \[images\]- Curbed](#)

[Restoration Of A Frank Lloyd Wright Masterpiece Is An Exercise In Detective Work: For Gunny Harboe, preserving Taliesin West is about restoring Wright's intent: ...established that 1939-1959 is Taliesin's period of significance...The 760-page Preservation Master Plan identifies what needs to be preserved and why...and prioritizes future research. By Diana Budds -- Harboe Architects \[images\]- Fast Company / Co.Design](#)

[Then & Now: Heart of the Empire: "People kept saying no more roads, but Robert Moses didn't listen.": The most ambitious plans of Moses's career were carried out...from a squat, Art Deco limestone complex in the marshy, undeveloped expanse of Randall's Island...the Triborough Bridge Authority Administration Building...re-dubbed the Robert Moses Building in 1989. By Adrian Shirk \[images\]- Catapult](#)

[Could a Titanic Seawall Save This Quickly Sinking City? Jakarta, Indonesia's fast-growing capital of 10 million people, is embarking on one of history's biggest seawall projects - to be shaped like a Garuda, a mythical bird-like creature: In 15 years, 80% of the northern city will lie below sea level...it aims to build an exterior wall off the coast that would be 25 miles long and 80 feet high...developers could buy land on 17 new artificial islands...it could cause some environmental harm, but they don't see a better way to save the city. By Wendy Koch -- Victor Coenen/Witteveen+Bos; Gijs van den Boomen/KuiperCompagnons \[images\]- National Geographic](#)

[The AIA Establishes a Commission on Equity in Architecture: The 22-member task force has one year to research and develop recommendations for generating equitable practices in the profession.- Architect Magazine](#)

[5 Events That Marked Architecture and Design in 2015: ...as a profession, as a practice, as a field of inquiry, and as a market \[and why they're important\]. By Jana Perkovic -- Assemble/Turner Prize; Justin McGuirk/Design Academy Eindhoven; Yves Béhar/Design Miami Visionary Award 2015; etc.- Artinfo](#)

[Call for entries: European Prize for Urban Public Space 2016: biennial competition for works that have created, recovered or improved public space within the geographic limits of the Council of Europe in 2014-15; no fee; deadline: February 22, 2016- Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona \(CCCCB\)](#)

[Call for entries: BUR/Berlin University Residences international architectural competition for students and young architects: propose the development of new ways of living around the city; cash prizes; earlybird registration deadline \(save money!\): February 14 \(submissions due April 24\)- ArchMedium](#)

[A Filtered View #3: Socially Progressive, Architecturally Conservative: A San Francisco Paradox: "Disruption" is the new buzz-word, but our new architecture \(with a few exceptions\) is anything but disruptive. A hallmark of a socially progressive environment is diversity - we need diversity in architecture, too. By Charles F. Bloszies, FAIA- ArchNewsNow.com](#)



[Emre Arolat Architects: Sancaklar Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey: The high walls surrounding the park...depicts a clear boundary between the chaotic outer world, and the serene atmosphere of the public park...Women are separated from the men by a perforated metal screen. This is the first time in mosque architecture women can pray in the same row as the men. By Kirsten Kiser \[images\]](#)

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